

Items 1 through 8

Use this passage to answer question 1 through 8.

Tranquility Falls

Tranquility Falls glittered like fine sugar in the distance as Brayden and his father pulled up to the trailhead. Brayden opened the car door and recoiled at the sharp scent of pine. His juice pouch gurgled and went flat as he slurped the last of its contents.

Brayden could not muster his usual enthusiasm for their annual father-son camping trip. The day before, Brayden's parents had broken the news to him that he would be spending the remainder of his vacation studying algebra in summer school. Six weeks of finding the value of x . No skateboarding with his friends or swimming at the community pool. Brayden chewed on his straw, the empty juice pouch hovering in front of his face. He hoisted his backpack and slung its straps over his shoulders.

"Leave your trash in the car or we'll just have to carry it back—pack it in, pack it out," yelled his father, already twenty yards up the trail. The car chirped as his father locked it too quickly for Brayden to do as he was asked. "Let's go, Slowpoke! First night festivities await!" Brayden groaned, stuffed the juice pouch into his back pocket, and followed his father up the trail.

Six miles from the trailhead, they began to set up camp in the forest along the Tranquility River. It had been a long, tiresome hike, and Brayden now struggled to set up his new tent until his patience was spent. When his father tried to help, Brayden snapped. "I don't need your help! Just because I don't get algebra—it doesn't mean I'm stupid!" Brayden hurled his tent poles onto the heap of twisted nylon and stormed off toward the river.

Upriver, Brayden sat on his favorite boulder and watched the sun sink beneath the trees. The juice pouch in his back pocket crinkled. He grabbed the pouch and threw it at the water as hard as he could. He sighed and turned to head back to the camp.

By the time Brayden returned to the camp, it was pitch black, save for the light of the campfire that had guided him back. Brayden was silent as he ate his dinner and endured his father's cheesiest tradition, the Proprietary and Confidential first-night campfire story.

"Native Americans say that Bear was king of this land once," his father began in a hushed voice, "as his father had been king before him. He had a great temper; he slept in the open and was proud, vain, and greedy. He left a trail of waste and wreckage everywhere he went as a warning to all who crossed his path. One day Coyote dared to approach him and said, 'Bear, I will have pups soon, and it breaks my heart to think they will have to live as I do, in the wake of your thoughtlessness!' Bear roared with rage and tossed Coyote aside by her ears, but as he did this, he saw behind her a river flowing not with water, but with his own thoughtless waste. Ashamed, Bear dug a den and stayed in it for five months, eating mostly berries, plants, and fish when he emerged. Forever onward to this day, the bears eat this way, and all stay in their dens for five months a year in observance of their former king's great realization: the land is not ours to own, but rather just to borrow."

The next morning, Brayden went to the river to splash cold water on his face. Out of the corner of his eye he saw a silver flash in the water: his empty juice pouch was stuck in some low-hanging branches.

His father's story echoed in his mind and made him think about his own thoughtlessness. He grabbed the juice pouch and slowly walked back to the camp.

When he arrived at the camp, he saw his father picking up the trash from breakfast. "I'm sorry, Dad. I made a mistake," Brayden sighed. "I've just been . . . mad . . ." His father gave him a look of understanding and patted him affectionately on the back.

That evening before dinner, as Brayden walked to his boulder, a blur of rust-colored movement caught his eye. He turned and saw a coyote directly opposite him on the other side of the river. The beautiful animal stared at Brayden for a brief moment. Then she inclined her head toward him and seemed to nod, before turning away and disappearing into the purple twilight.

Item 1

Why does Brayden MOST LIKELY throw the juice pouch into the river?

- A He does not know any better.
- B He does not want to carry it around.
- C He is bored from spending time with his family.
- D He is expressing his frustration with recent events.

Item 2

How does the word choice in the sentence add to the development of the story?

He hoisted his backpack and slung its straps over his shoulders.

- A It indicates that the backpack is heavy.
- B It clarifies how the backpack should be carried.
- C It illustrates that the backpack is difficult for Brayden to handle.
- D It suggests that carrying the backpack is a new experience for Brayden.

Item 3

Which word BEST replaces *recoiled* without changing the meaning of the sentence?

Brayden opened the car door and recoiled at the sharp scent of pine.

- A blinked
- B cringed
- C flinched
- D hesitated

Items 9 and 10

In this section, you will read about the ongoing debate over the use of genetically modified (GM) food. What are the benefits and dangers of producing and consuming foods that have been genetically modified? You will write an argumentative essay in your own words supporting either side of the debate in which you argue for or against the use of GM food.

Before you begin planning and writing, you will read two texts and answer one question about what you have read. These are the titles of the texts you will read:

1. "GM Food Saves Lives"
2. "What We Don't Know About GM Food Can Kill Us"

As you read the texts, think about what details from the texts you might use in your argumentative essay.

GM Food Saves Lives

by Rebecca Wilson

Genetically modified (GM) food was introduced to the citizens of the United States in 1994. Since then, the use of genetics on produce and animals has become so widespread that each person in the United States is most likely eating GM food daily. A primary reason for its popularity is how beneficial it is to people and businesses.

What is genetic modification?

Plants and animals naturally go through a process of selection for survival. Features that make the plant or animal more likely to live are passed along, and features that are not advantageous are weeded out. These genetic mutations occur over generations, though, making improvement a slow-moving process. Scientists discovered that they could improve specific characteristics quickly by introducing foreign genes into an organism, such as those from plants, animals, and even viruses. For example, exposing a plant to a certain virus can make it more resistant to disease. Transferring genes from cows to pigs can help the pigs create more milk for larger litters of piglets. The targeting of genes allows scientists to bring out the specific traits of a product that will make it more successful.

Uses of GM foods

There are three main reasons for genetically modifying food: to produce more food at lower cost, to increase the health value of the food, and to make the food more desirable. When crops are modified to withstand disease and drought, it takes fewer resources to produce them, and fewer crops are lost. But altering food goes much further than this. Scientists are also able to make food more nutritious. For example, Golden Rice is infused with vitamin A in the hopes of saving the lives of children suffering from vitamin A deficiencies. However, the earliest uses of GM food are still the most popular. Genetic modification makes food look and taste better. Tomatoes stay ripe longer. Apples have fewer bruises. Strawberries grow larger.

Safety

Opponents of GM food say that changing an organism's genetic code is dangerous. They say that changes to a plant's durability can create superweeds that kill crops and that altering nutrition values

could cause health problems for the people who eat the food. Yet thousands of research studies have shown no evidence that GM food causes harm, either to the environment or to people. It's safe, effective, and needed in a time when food shortages are skyrocketing.

What We Don't Know About GM Food Can Kill Us

by Daniel McLeod

Humans have a history of moving forward with great ideas--until they realize that those ideas weren't so great. Back in the 1940s, people around the world started using a miracle insecticide called DDT ("dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane"). It killed every annoying insect out there! It was helping to eliminate malaria-carrying mosquitoes and life-threatening spiders. DDT was the best insecticide ever—until people realized the severe damage it was doing to the environment. It took over thirty years of using the chemical agent for scientists to verify the problems and for countries to ban DDT's use. Only now, seventy years since it became popular, are some of the species negatively affected by it finally regaining a foothold on life.

Genetically modified (GM) food is our generation's DDT. Just as before, people have jumped headlong into the process of making food better, stronger, and different through changes to an organism's genetic code. Scientists are altering plants and animals at their most fundamental levels with no regard to the effects we might see in twenty, thirty, or even seventy years from now. True, this process is producing food at a lower cost and higher rate, something this world desperately needs, but at what cost?

There have been documented cases of genetically altered crops affecting the durability of weeds that compete for the crops' resources. It's believed the genetic mutation of the crops spread to the weeds. These weeds, called superweeds, are aggressive and resistant to the chemicals used to kill them and now threaten the crops' growth. Another current problem is the reduction in insects such as butterflies and bees, which pollinate flowers. Crops designed to produce natural insecticides are killing off these important creatures. The ecosystem is thrown off balance without them.

Those problems are nothing compared to the ones we don't know about yet. How will these modifications affect the humans who consume this food over a lifetime? How will unforeseen mutations affect the food? These questions can't be answered right now since we won't see the effects for decades.

The biogenetics companies that produce GM food say the food has been tested by thousands of studies. What they don't say, however, is that they are the ones who funded the studies. Their financial interest in studies showing that GM food is safe compromises the believability of the studies. How might their corporate dollars have affected the results the scientists are reporting?

The plain truth is that we don't know how GM food will affect humans, plants, and animals in the future. We shouldn't be risking our lives by eating altered food without knowing whether or not genetic modification is another DDT.

Item 10

Now that you have read “GM Food Saves Lives” and “What We Don’t Know About GM Food Can Kill Us” and answered a question about what you have read, create a plan for your argumentative essay.

Think about ideas, facts, definitions, details, and other information and examples you want to use. Think about how you will introduce your topic and what the main topic will be for each paragraph. Be sure to identify the sources by title or number when using details or facts directly from the sources.

Write an argumentative essay in your own words supporting either side of the debate in which you argue for or against the use of GM food. Be sure to use information from both texts.

Now write your argumentative essay. Be sure to:

- Introduce your claim.
- Support your claim with logical reasoning and relevant evidence from the texts.
- Acknowledge and address alternate or opposing claims.
- Organize the reasons and evidence logically.
- Use words, phrases, and clauses to connect your ideas and to clarify the relationships among claims, counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.
- Establish and maintain a formal style.
- Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

Check your work for correct usage, grammar, spelling, and capitalization.

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